Table of Contents

1. Allegiances
2. Prologue
3. Chapter 1
4. Chapter 2
5. Chapter 3
6. Chapter 4
7. Chapter 5
8. Chapter 6
9. Chapter 7
10. Chapter 8
11. Chapter 9
12. Chapter 10
13. Chapter 11
14. Chapter 12
15. Chapter 13

Allegiances

MIDNIGHTCLAN

Leader: Sunstar- Pale orange and yellow tabby tom with amber eyes.

Deputy: Lilywhisper- Blue/silver tabby she-cat with blue-eyes.

Medicine Cat: Bluelight- Black she-cat with deep blue eyes.

Warriors:

Bumblefoot- Lilac lynx point tom with sea green eyes.

Heronflame- Silver/fawn tabby she-cat with copper eyes.

Flamewhisker- Cinnamon and white tom with golden eyes.

Foxstrike- Orange tabby tom with green eyes.

Fawnpelt- Fawn she-cat with leaf-green eyes.

Eaglesoar- Brown tabby tom with browny green eyes.

Shinestipe- Brown tabby tom with vivid-aqua eyes.

Squirreldapple- Cream tortoiseshell she-cat with yellow eyes.

Blazewind- Red and white tom with hazel eyes.

Birchstrike- Cream tabby she-cat with orange eyes.

Dawnspots- Speckled cream she-cat with hazel eyes.

Apprentices:

Silverpaw- Silver she-cat with blue eyes.

Squirrelpaw- Cream tortoiseshell she-cat with yellow eyes.

Blazepaw- Red and white tom with hazel eyes.

Birchpaw- Cream tabby she-cat with orange eyes.

Queens:

Winterfang- White (tiny bit tabby) she-cat with deep blue eyes (Mother to Foxstike's kit, Bramblekit).

Sandfur- Cream she-cat with green eyes (Mother to Fluffykit).

SilverCloud- Silver tabby she-cat with green eyes (Mother to Shinestripe's kits, Icekit and Poppykit).

Kits:

Pinekit- White (with dark red stripes) tom with blue eyes.

Icekit- White (with barley visible stripes) tom with ice blue eyes.

Poppykit- Red calico she-cat with green eyes.

Bramblekit- Orange and white ticked tabby tom with deep green eyes.

Fluffykit- Gray and Cream she-cat with light yellow eyes.

SUNCLAN

Leader: Treestar- Brown and cream tabby tom with yellow eyes.

MOONCLAN

Leader: Lynxstar- Dark gray ticked tabby she-cat with green eyes.

Prologue

A jet black tom padded through a forever-green forest. Dry leaves crunched under his thundering steps. A scrambling squirrel ran fast him, as if to say, "Chase me, chase me! I'm prey!" but the cat's whiskers didn't even twitch.

"Blackstar, why so glum?"

Blackstar hopped in surprise and turn to face his speaker. It was a beautiful she-cat with a glossy black pelt and a snow-white tail. Her fur was short and neat, and her legs were long and graceful.

"Greetings Magpietail, I was just enjoying a peaceful afternoon walk."

"Humph, enjoying..." The she-cat huffed under her breath.

"What's that, Magpietail?"

"Nothing," Magpietail widened her eyes with innocence, "It's just that you don't look like your enjoying this walk of yours."

"No," Blackstar sighed, "I must admit that I'm not. It's just this prophecy..."

"Bramblekit and Fluffykit can keep secrets," The black and white she-cat interrupted.

"It's not that," Blackstar twitched his tail with slight annoyance, "I'm worried about my granddaughter, Bluelight."

"Sunstar's a good leader, he'll take care of her. After all, it was you who appointed him deputy."

Blackstar sighed again, "I'm also worried about Poppykit, and her brother Icekit. Also Pinekit, who was adopted by Silvercloud after his mother and father died.

"Love can make anyone do evil, even the ones with the nicest of hearts..."

Chapter 1

"MidnightClan, attack!"

Streams of warriors ran towards each other, screeching and caterwauling. They flooded the land and filled the air with non-stop battle cries. Two of the most heroic warriors, Iceclaw and Poppyheart, yelled ultimately deafening. They jumped up on a silver furred she-cat. She effortlessly dodged their well aimed blows.

"Poppyheart, attack from behind!"

The calico warrior crawled up behind and unexpectedly leaped up on the warrior. She meowed loudly in triumph and Iceclaw too, until the silver warrior jumped up too high.

"Oof," Poppykit landed on the nursery floor with a clamorous thump.

"Come on Poppyheart! She's getting away!" Icekit bounced up with all of his strength, trying to reach his mother's tail, which acted as the "silver warrior".

"Poppykit, Icekit! My tail is not a piece of moss to be attacked by a herd of screaming kits," Silvercloud mocked them, "Go play with Bramblekit and Fluffykit outside instead."

"Yes Silvercloud," The littermates tumbled out of the nursery, playfully roaring and hissing.

"hhhmm, kits!" The silver furred queen sighed before turning around to chat with Winterfang and Sandfur, the parents of Bramblekit and Fluffykit, about how much of a nuisance kits can be sometimes.

The kits went right on, roaring and hissing - right into the fresh-kill pile. The pile was as big as ever, for the hunting patrol had just come back with loads of prey; meaty blackbirds, well-feed rabbits,

pot-bellied squirrels...

"Lets hide in here and surprise other cats!" Icekit whispered into his sister's ear.

"No, you mouse-brain! What if they eat us?"

"We'll surprise them first!"

Poppykit gave in and the kits climbed into the essence of the fresh-kill pile.

Chapter 2

While Icekit and Poppykit giggled nervously inside of the very fresh fresh-kill pile, a very hungry Foxstrike padded through camp. His belly growled loudly as he passed Snownose and Fawnpelt sharing tounges on a sunny patch of grass.

"It looks like you've had a busy day," Snownose remarked, "You should stop at the fresh kill pile for a quick snack."

"That where I'm headed right at this moment, actually, Lilywhisper said that I did a lot of work this morning and gave me the rest of the day off," The orange warrior mewed in reply, "I've spotted a very round and meaty squirrel in there. I can't wait to sink my teeth in it!" The tom licked his chops with pleasure, as he imagined gulping down that scrumptious tree rodent.

"Have a nice afternoon, then," Fawnpelt meowed, "And enjoy that squirrel!"

"Oh, I will! I hope it tastes as good as it sounds. I'll bring you guys that rabbit over there too," Foxstrike again started to walk towards the fresh-kill pile. At the sound of his nearing footsteps, Poppykit and Icekit hushed at each other and sat as quiet and still as mice.

The squirrel that the tom observed was laying right on top of the two kits. The orange tom soon stopped at the pile of prey and grabbed on to the squirrel.

"Three, two..." Icekit counted down softy. Steaks of the sky now showed as the tree rodent was lifted up, "One!"

Foxstrike dropped the squirrel and staggered back in shock as two kits flew directly into his face.

"Mrrow!!!" They screamed happily, but the warrior wasn't at all so thrilled.

"What in StarClan were you two doing in there?! I was ready to accept my burden, for I thought you were ghosts that StarClan sent to kill me, until I recognized you. Silvercloud's kits, isn't it? Icekit and Poppykit! In the name of StarClan! Who has ever heard of kits hiding in fresh-kill piles!?" Foxstrike heard giggling behind him and turned around just in time to see the heads of the four apprentices ducking back into the apprentice den.

While the tom was distracted by the laughing cats, Poppykit and Icekit ran back to the nursery. There they found Bramblekit and Fluffykit.

"Hey guys! You'll never guess where I've been!"

Chapter 3

"Hush, keep quiet so that Sandfur, Winterfang, and Silvercloud don't hear us. Come into this corner, gather close," Bramblekit whispered.

"Come on, tell us where you went!" Poppykit urged him. She couldn't wait to hear his story. Bramblekit was *always* running away somewhere where he wasn't supposed to. Last time, he climbed into a hole in Dry-Oak and hooted there like an owl until all the queens hurried their kits inside the den, afraid that their kits would get eaten by the "owl".

"I sneaked into the forest," The orange kit smiled slyly as the others whispered and gasped, "Eaglesoar was on guard. I slid past him easily - he was laying on the ground snoring his head off!"

"Are you sure he was on guard, not just resting?" Fluffykit asked.

"Maybe, but anyways, I walked out of camp. There were very, very, very tall thin trees everywhere. They didn't have branches or anything! They were just tall with some small leaf things on the top."

"But isn't that just grass?" Icekit inquired.

"Maybe, but it was still huge and cool, so it's a forest."

"A grass forest?" Fluffykit mewed.

"Ya, a grass forest! A golden grass forest! Then I scented something weird, not like MidnightClan or SunClan **or** MoonClan! Not like a cat at all. I decided to check it out. I found this hole thing that was supposed to be a den or something, but it was **HUGE**! Since I found it, I thought that I might as well look what's in side. So I stepped in... And guess what?!"

"What!!!?" The other kits squealed anxiously.

"A long pointy nose, smooth red fur, black beady eyes, big

triangular ears..."

"A fox!" Poppykit squeaked. She was shaking like a little leaf in the wind with excitement.

"Yup, I came face to face with this **GIGANTIC** fox! I think it was a fox cub, but it was still really super big. I stared at it and then, it sniffed me! It stuck it's wet black nose right at my face, it was so close that I could smell it's stinky, disgusting breath. Fox breath is now the 1st place winner of the smelliness contest. It smelled of crowfood, maggots, rotten flesh, and a bunch of other yucky stuff all mixed together," Bramblekit wrinkled his nose, "I didn't like it smelling me, so I turned and ran home," The kit concluded.

"Aww, you were just a fraidy-mouse, running away from it like that!" Icekit teased his friend.

"Like you wouldn't run too!" The orange tom kit snapped back, "I think you would turn and run back before you even stepped out of camp!"

"Think it's good that Bramblekit ran back," Fluffykit said, "What is the mother fox came and ate him?!"

"Let's play foxes vs warriors!" Poppykit suddenly exclaimed, "Two of us will be foxes and the others will be warriors and we have to attack each other!"

The mothers of the four kits watched their children running in and out of the nursery, when Winterfang said, "You're right Silvercloud, sometimes kits are such a nuisance, but when their playing like this, the're outright cute!"

Chapter 4

"Lets go!" Sunstar gathered his patrol. The moon was rising in the sky, bright and round. There wasn't a single cloud that could disturb the peaceful night. It was a full moon, the time for all the Clans to go to the gathering . Poppykit, Icekit, Bramblekit, and Fluffykit poked their heads out of the nursery, wishing they could come too.

Poppykit's calico pelt burned with envy. She had always dreamed of going to the gathering. Seeing his friend's whiskers and tail droop, Bramblekit decided to cheer her up.

"We can go to the gathering too!" The tom kit proclaimed.

"We can?" Poppykit was puzzled. Was Bramblekit planning to sneak behind the gathering patrol all the way to RedStone?

Bramblekit guessed her thoughts by her baffled look.

"Not not to the real gathering with everyone else, of course! We'll create our own Clan, umm..." Bramblekit spotted a black beetle crawling past. "Urr... BeetleClan! I'm Bramblestar, leader of BeetleClan! Let's head to the gathering!"

"What are you guys doing?" Pinekit walked up to them. He was a sleek white tom with red-brown stripes. His eyes gleamed ice blue. The tabby tom was older than the other kits by half a moon.

"We're warriors of BeetleClan going to a gathering!" Fluffykit explained, hopping up and down.

"And he's an intruder!" Icekit growled amusingly.

"Don't break the truce!" Poppykit squealed.

"What truce? For a warrior of ShadowClan, full moon is the day that blood is spilled, not peace!" Pinekit joined in with the game. He

jumped up on Icekit, blowing his off his paws.

"StarClan will not be happy!" Icekit hissed, standing up.

"I don't know of any such Clan! All Clans are just a mischief of mice! ShadowClan is the only real Clan!" The white tabby tom kit was trying as hard as he possibly could to sound and act like a blood-thirsty ShadowClan warrior.

"BeetleClan, attack!" Bramblekit hollered.

"Why don't the warriors of BeetleClan go to bed instead? It's way past sun-down and your still not asleep!" Winterfang nudged the kits back into the nursery.

Chapter 5

The dark horizon started to lighten, shining deep scarlet. The sky was no longer black, it was navy blue with a tint of purple, like a blueberry. Dawn stars were still shining when Poppykit opened her eyes. She stared through the entrance of the nursery into the darkness. A mist of worry passed over her eyes. Was that the two glowing amber eyes of the fox that Bramblekit had talked about? She blinked. The lights were gone.

It's just my imagination, Poppykit told herself.

It stuck it's wet black nose right at my face, it was so close that I could smell it's stinky, disgusting breath. Fox breath is now the 1st place winner of the smelliness contest. It smelled of crowfood, maggots, rotten flesh, and a bunch of other yucky stuff all mixed together, Bramblekit's story rang in Poppykit's ears. The calico kit turned her head to check if it was her orange-furred friend whispering in her ear to scare her, but no.

It's just my imagination, The kit repeated inside her mind. Or was it? Poppykit's delicate pink nose scented the vile odor of crowfood, maggots, rotten flesh, and something else very foul.

Fox! The kit's hackles rose and tail bristled. She sprang to her feet. Poppykit then shook her head. There was no orange eyes glowing in the dark, no extremely gruesome smell of fox, and no beady eyed, tall eared, long snouted, red furred fox itself. It was just Bramblekit's horrid anecdote.

Poppykit's pelt suddenly burned hot with embarrassment. Her fur lied back down to it's original position, her tail curled around her legs as she settled herself in the bedding again.

Something tickled in the back of her throat. She let out a small cough.

It must be the bedding. The apprentices haven't cleaned it in a while, have they not? Poppykit asked herself. She looked down below her paws at the bedding. It was fresh and new and still smelled like the forest, *I guess it's not the bedding then. It must be the cold air.*

Poppykit stopped paying attention to her coughing and again looked out into the dimness outside. All her dreams about becoming an apprentice and then a loyal warrior had melted like summer snow. Apprentices, warriors, deputies and leaders had to go into the forest a lot, that meant that they could get eaten by a fox at any time. The woods were probably flooding with them, along with the eagles and hawks and badgers...

She snuggled closer to her mother's warm, furry side. Why couldn't she stay in the nursery forever next to Silvercloud's side? Poppykit wanted ever so much to fall asleep again but she couldn't. Every time the kit closed her eyes, they would slowly pry open and Poppykit again would find herself staring at the stars.

A rustle arose from the back of the den. Poppykit angled her head towards the sound. Fluffykit's round, yellow eyes gleamed at the calico kit from under her mother's tail. The gray and cream kit squeezed herself from under Sandfur's fluffy tail and flopped down next to Poppykit.

"Can't you wait to become a warrior?!" Fluffykit whispered eagerly.

Is she **actually** *excited to become a warrior with all these foxes around?* Poppykit wondered before answering, "Ya, I guess."

"What kind of answer is 'Ya, I guess'?" The fluffy kit demanded, "Aren't you excited?"

"What about all the foxes?"

"Big, strong warriors know how to deal with them, you don't have to worry. Foxes don't like to live in Clan territories either, they just come once in a while."

That calmed Poppykit down, "Thank's for telling me, now I can't wait to become a warrior!"

Fluffykit and Poppykit heard steps outside. They looked up to see Pinekit with leaves in his mouth.

"What are you doing?" The she-kits squeaked at the same time.

"I'm helping Bluelight. Squirrelpaw got a thorn in her paw. I must say that it was her own fault, because it was she who put in the new bedding," Pinekit mumbled around the leaves in his mouth, "This is chervil and marigold."

"Ew, don't they taste gross? Once I was coughing and I thought I had whitecough, so I went and ate some catmint and maybe something else. It was disgusting," Fluffykit stuck out her tongue.

"They're no that bad, and anyways, I have to get used to them, I'm going to be Bluelight's apprentice," The tabby kit lifted his head up proudly.

"Your giving up your opportunity to become a warrior to become a Medicine cat?!" Poppykit was astonished.

"Why not," He shrugged, "I get to save cats by healing their wounds and curing sickness, *and* I get to go to the StarCrystal to talk to StarClan every half-moon. Bye now, Bluelight is probably wondering where I went. " Pinekit hopped away.

Chapter 6

The tall spruce's needles sparkled like millions of stars. Poppykit started at them in awe.

"Hello, is anybody there?" she called out into the forest. Her voice echoed mysteriously. She was all alone in this huge, shining, sparkling woodland.

All of a sudden, the needle filled branches of the trees stopped sparkling, dark clouds rolled over the dark blue (but at the same time light and shining) sky. Thunder boomed and lightning crashed.The calico kitten's hackles rose. She shivered in fright.

How strange, Poppykit thought, *There's thunder and there's lightning but no rain!*

The she-kit gasped when she saw the dark clouds lowering themselves lower and lower to the ground, to her. Soon, she could feel them brushing the tips of her long, feather-like fur. They were all around Poppykit, whirling and whizzing in a wild frenzy. Wind whistled past her ears. The hurricane was pulling at her her fur so hard, it felt like she was going to get sucked into that dark, blowering torpedo.

"Cat... heart...," Voices started howling around Poppykit. Some words were stolen by the wind, "Cold as ice... strong as fire... rise above the stars... rule the Clans... beware!... tabby warrior..."

"I don't understand! Who's there?! Who is it?!" The little she-kit hollered, "Please, I don't get it!"

The lightning and thunder, wind and clouds came to a sudden stop. The wind tugging on her fur turned into someone's prodding paw, the voice, loud an booming, became Bramblekit's excited whisper,

"Poppykit! Wake up! We're going exploring!"

"What?" Poppykit jumped to her feet, then let out a sigh of relief. It was just all a dream, nothing more than a cream.

"Ok, let's go!" She then exclaimed, bounding out of the nursery with the other kits close behind.

Chapter 7

The air outside was chilly. Poppykit could see her breath as an icy white cloud coming out of her mouth. She breathed in and out, in and out, watching the little cloud appear, then melt in mid air.

""let's try to climb on top of all the dens!" Bramblekit exclaimed.

The other three kits squealed with excitement.

Climb on top of all of the dens! Poppykit thought, *What an adventure!*

They set out, tripping and hopping over sticks, stones and moss, whispering happily among each other, and hiding themselves under bushes every time a Clanmate went by. Then, they would loudly say "sh!" to each other and giggle hysterically.

"We're almost at the medicine cat's den!" Fluffyfur murmured to the others. The rough walls of the boulder-cave den were easy to climb up and the kits were soon sitting on top of it, looking down at the clearing with a bird's eye view.

"Everything looks so much cooler from up here!" Icekit exclaimed, his sharp eyes gazing down, "Why didn't we think of coming here earlier?! We should get up here every day!'

"This is probably what Sunstar feels like every time he climbs up on DryOak," Poppykit adjudged, "Only he ought to feel like a bird up there, it's so high up."

"The bramble bush on the apprentice den is even higher," Bramblekit surveyed the other dens, "If only we could get on top of it..."

"It wouldn't hurt to try!" Poppykit hopped on top of the den nearby, the warrior's den.

"I agree, let's go!" Fluffykit joined in.

Soon, the kits had crossed the warrior's den, then the elder's log den, and they were standing on the ledge between the elder's wooden cave and the apprentice's den.

"We're almost there!" Bramblekit informed the others.

Poppykit was very excited.

We are going to be the first kits in MidnightClan to climb on top of the apprentice den! The calico kit thought with joy as she flew across the gap and landed on the den.

There was a tickle in the back of the kit's throat again. The tickling grew bigger and bigger, as if there was someone dumping dust into her mouth. Poppykit let out a few dry, hoarse coughs. But the tickling didn't go away. She found herself gasping for breath before she started coughing again. These were big coughs, unlike the other ones. The kit coughed, and coughed, she couldn't stop coughing. Poppykit's knees gave up under her as she fell into a coughing fit.

"Poppykit, are you okay?" Fluffykit asked with worry in her voice. Her only answer was more coughing.

The calico kit's throat started to ache. Oh, how she wished she could stop coughing!

All of a sudden, she felt movement under her paws. She let out a startled mew as the den crackled and broke down.

Chapter 8

"Ah!" Fluffykit cried.

"Help!" Bramblekit yawped.

"Oof," Icekit said when he landed on sleeping Emberpaw's head.

"Ouch!" Emberpaw exclaimed.

The four kits and apprentice were swimming in a pool of sticks, thorns, twigs, grass, and everything else used to create the roof and walls of the den.

Icekit was tumbling around in the broken den, Bramblekit spat out a mouthful of dry bedding, Fluffykit was blinking the dust and grit out of her eyes, while Poppykit, weak from coughing, hung limply from a bigger offshoot.

"What was that sound?" Foxstrike poked his head out of the warrior's den.

"Oh my gosh!" Fawnpelt meowed.

"What happened?!" Eaglesoar and his hunting patrol had just come back.

"Sunstar! Come here quick!" Lilywhisper exclaimed.

"It took me, Sunstar, and Grasstail a long, hard half moon to rebuild that den, back when we were young warriors and that storm happened!" Dawnspots lashed her long tail.

"Bramblekit!"

"Fluffykit!"

"Icekit! Poppykit!"

The kit's mothers leaped into jumble of sticks and started digging out their children. Emberpaw grabbed Poppykit and carried her out of the pile of den.

"What happened here?" Sunstar padded up to the ruined apprentice den, followed closely by his loyal medicine cat, Bluelight. Pinekit hopped behind her.

"We were climbing on top of the dens...," Bramblekit started explaining.

"Then Poppykit started coughing...,"Fluffykit interupted.

"And we fell through the den," Icekit concluded.

"You three won't be allowed to leave the nursery for three sunrises, that will be your punishment. I hope you learned your lesson and will be good kits from now on," The MidnightClan leader said sternly.

"Yes Sunstar," The kits guiltily lowered their heads and stared at their paws.

"Good," Sunstar continued, "Squirrelpaw, Birchpaw, Blazepaw, and Emberpaw, you will sleep in the elder's den until your's is repaired. Bluelight, take Poppykit to your den, that coughing can't be ignored."

The medicine cat nodded and picked up the the frail kit by the scruff. The cat padded away to the medicine cat's den with Silvercloud at her tail.

Chapter 9

Poppykit looked at the leaf scattered floor of the medicine cat's den. The farthest corner smelled like soaked moss, in another corner came a sweet aroma, to the right she scented something leafy and bitter, and the air just left tingled with a sour odor.

There were also leaves of all kinds of different shapes and sizes. Large, broad leaves some entirely some sparsely toothed, some leaves some nice shade of green with a red contour, a sweet smelling plant with big, leafy, fern-like fronds, the familiar dandy lion, thin and spiky leaves, small soft leaves, leaves purple in colour, and many, many more. Also large wads of cobweb, smooth brown nuts and tiny, black seeds.

Wow, there's a lot of herbs you have to remember to be a medicine cat! Poppykit thought.

"Pinekit, get me some catmint, the plant I showed you yesterday," Bluelight requested her future apprentice. There was some digging and sniffing around before the tom replied.

"We're out of catmint! Well, we do have a few leaves, but their all dry and ruined."

"Then get some chickweed. It's not as good as catmint but it will have to do. It has fat, almond shaped leaves. Let's see if you can find them."

"These?" Pinekit lifted up a few big leaves.

"Good job, Pinekit! You'll make a great medicine cat," The MidnightClan medicine cat praised the kit. She took one of the leaves from the little tom and pushed them towards Poppykit.

"Eat these."

"Do I have to?" The calico kit whined.

"Do you want to get better?" Bluelight inquired.

"Yes," Poppykit stared down at the leaf.

It can't be that bad, can it? She thought. The kit sighed and nibbled on the edge of the leaf.

"Bleh!" She stuck out her tougue, "It tastes disgusting!" But she continued gulping it down until it was all gone.

"Can I go back to the nursery now?" Poppykit pleaded.

"You'll have to stay here until I see that your cough is all better," Bluelight mewed in reply.

"Don't worry little one," Silvercloud stood up from her spot in the corner, "I can stay here with you if you want."

"I'll be fine, thanks, I'm almost an apprentice," the little calico kit curled up into a ball. She didn't want to seem like she was too little to stay on her own for a while. But inside, she was sad and lonely.

Chapter 10

Poppykit spent a while in the medicine cat's den, though she couldn't exactly remember how long. The nights grew long and chilly. The little kit wished she hadn't rejected Silvercloud's offer, for now, she longed to be curled up next to her mother's side. But soon enough, she returned back to the nursery. There she found Bramblekit, Fluffykit, and her brother, Icekit playing Toss the moss Ball.

"Poppykit! Your finally out of the medicine cat's den!" the orange furred tom was the first one to notice Poppykit's presence, "How's your cough?"

"Good, thanks," The calico she-kit said, though she could fell the tickling in her throat coming back She decided not to tell anyone because firstly, she hated the taste of herbs, and secondly, she wasn't even coughing, maybe it was just a hair from the squirrel she ate this morning, but that certainly needn't to be brought to be brought to the attention of a medicine cat.

"Sorry that I ruined all the fun for you," Poppykit knew it was her fault that the apprentice den was destroyed and her friends were punished, all because of her silly coughing.

"It wasn't your fault," Fluffykit replied, "You were sick."

The calico kit sighed with relief. They weren't mad at her for wrecking their adventure.

"Forget about all that, let's play Toss the Moss Ball instead," Icekit was holding the moss ball in his mouth. Then he launched it into the air and hit it with his paw with all his might. The moss flew across the nursery, almost hitting Winterfang in the muzzle. All the kits ran and tumbled over each other, trying to get the ball first. That's how the game started. The first kit to grab the ball was the tosser. In that case it was Icekit. Everyone else was a catcher. The tosser then had to stand in the farthest corner of the nursery and

toss the ball. The catcher's had to seize it and take it to the den's entrance, while the tosser ran along the walls of the nursery in a circle, trying to sprint a full circle and return to the starting point before that.

Poppykit had taken hold of the ball and was racing towards the den's mouth. From the corner of her eye, she could see that her brother was only a few strides away from winning. She took one last long leap and landed in the nursery's doorway.

"Out!" she exclaimed, dropping the ball of moss.

Icekit skidded to a stop, "Darn it, I almost made it!"

"I'm tosser!" Poppykit hopped on the spot with joy. She had never beaten Icekit before!

Just then, they heard rustling in the bushes outside.

"What was that?!" Bramblekit let out a cry of surprise, ears standing erect and turning towards the sound.

"Let's go see what it is!" Icekit said, hurrying out of the den. The others ran not far behind him.

"It's over there now," Fluffykit noted. The brambles around the edge of camp were slightly quivering.

"Shh, keep quiet. Maybe it's trying to attack camp. We have to surprise it and chase it away," Bramblekit fell into something similar to a hunting crouch. Everyone else copied him.

Poppykit suddenly realized something and with a shaky voice said, "What is it's a bear?!"

"A bear?!" Icekit and Fluffykit exchanged glances.

"Don't be silly, bears hardly ever come here and usually live farther downriver, that's what Foxstrike told me. And besides, a huge bear wouldn't be able to fit inside that small shrub," The orange and white tom-kit reassured his friends. They continued creeping towards the bush. When they finally hopped into it with a loud

meow, they didn't find a fox, red or grey, nor a prairie badger,or a wolverine, or wolf, or coyote, or even a field mouse. Sitting hidden in the branches of the brambles was red and white furred Blazepaw.

"What are you guys doing here?!" The apprentice exclaimed quietly, a bit frightened after almost being attacked by a patrol of curious kits.

"Oh, we thought you were a bear, sorry," Poppykit apologized. Her pelt felt hot with embarrassment, "What are you doing here anyway?"

"I'm sneaking out of ca... urr... umm... going- going on an secret adventure! Ya, an adventure...," Blazepaw gave the kits a not very reassuring smile.

"Ooh, what kind of adventure?!" Poppykit asked.

"Urr... umm...," The red and white tom faltered.

"Can we come with you?!" Fluffykit instantaneously spoke up.

"Oh, yes!" The calico she-kit was thrilled with the idea.

"Can we?" Her brother queried.

"Umm... sure... ya... ok," Blazepaw stuttered before agreeing completely, "Of course you can come, it will be fun! Just don't tell anybody, after all, this is a top secret escapade."

Chapter 11

The kits and Blazepaw wormed their way through and out of the bramble bushes. Poppykit stared out into the distance in awe. She had never been outside of camp before. It was absolutely beautiful. Baby blue sky covered in white puffs of clouds, many birds flying towards the warmer lands downriver, and a great ocean of grass, light golden in colour.

"Where are we going?" Bramblekit asked the apprentice.

"To Moonlit Lake. I've been there many times. Ravishing, absolutely ravishing. The water is always warm, except for the moons of late leaf-fall, leaf-bare, and early new-leaf. It's a pleasure to dip your paws in on a hot, sunny day. You even get to swim to the bottom of it when you become a warrior."

"Really? Cool!" The orange tom was shaking with excitement. He loved going on adventures.

"Let's get going! I think if we stay here any longer, Bramblekit will explode!" Fluffykit giggled.

"Follow me," Blazepaw instructed.

Chapter 12

A lonely Meadowlark let out a sharp cry. Two blue-legged Moorhens hurriedly crossed the cat's path.

"I reckon I'll catch several on the way back," The apprentice stated. They walked on, hill after hill, valley after valley, plateau after plateau.

Poppykit's muscles started to ache. She was not used to such long hikes, only running around camp. Her friends were starting to look tired too. They all moaned when they saw that there was another big hill to climb, bigger than the rest.

"Do we have to climb *that?!*" Bramblekit asked.

"Yup, we..." Blazepaw was interrupted by Fluffykit.

"Do we *have* to?" she whined glancing nervously at the hill.

"Yes we have to climb it! It's the last hill. On top of it, we'll be like on the top of the world, looking down on Moonlit Lake!"

The kit's spirits lifted. Poppykit was the first one to scamper up on the top. She gasped at the beauty of the scene around her. Blazepaw was right, it was like being on top of the world. Below Poppykit was a beautiful golden prairie. Leaping across the grasses where two magnificent Pronghorn. They were a pale cream, with white underparts. One had big antlers on it's head. They were twisted and curved, just like the branches of Dry Oak.

In the bright blue, cloudless, sky, a V of geese flew overhead. Their hansom silhouettes reflected against the gold/blue lake.

Chapter 13

"Wow!" Bramblekit exclaimed.

"Beautiful!" Fluffykit jumped up and down.

Icekit was speechless with amazement.

Poppykit squealed. she had never seen anything like this before. Now the new discoveries she and the others had made in camp seemed boring and dull. The calico kit just *had* to go down and touch the shimmering waters of Moonlit Lake. She takes of down the hill at full speed. It was wonderful to feel the crisp air hit her long fur and legs leaping along with the ease of a deer.

"Poppykit! Watch out!" These words were a soft whisper somewhere far away. Poppykit didn't pay any attention to them. She leaped higher than ever before and... Squish! She landed on a huge slippery puddle of dark coloured mud.

Oh no, She thought, That was what Blazepaw was saying to watch out!

"Mrrow!" Poppykit let out a frightened screech as she started sliding down towards the water. She couldn't stop because the mud puddle was slippery. Her pupils shrank when he saw that the lake was right in front of her.